



The Pathfinder

The newsletter of the Midwest Institute for Native American Studies

Special AMS Edition

March, 2011

Month of
Nme Bne –
Month of the
Trout Moon

How Should We Teach About Native Americans?

By Linda Bechtle

THANKS TO MARIA MONTESSORI'S foresight and sensitivity, teaching about other cultures is an integral part of the Montessori curriculum, beginning in Early Childhood classes. Especially at the elementary level, some Montessorians incorporate information about this country's first culture, Native Americans, into the curriculum at some point of the three-year cycle.

We here at MINAS join with many American Indians and many other educators in our belief that accurate information about this country's indigenous people **MUST** be taught in our schools, both public and private. This can be a daunting task for many reasons, including the fact that many teachers do not have the necessary background knowledge or appropriate materials to provide a correct and culturally sensitive experience for their students. Even the most well-intentioned teacher can wind up furthering stereotypical thinking and doing more harm than good.

So we've dedicated this entire issue of The Pathfinder to all of you dedicated Montessori professionals. In it, you'll find some resources, ideas for your own materials, and information on the materials we've created for you. As with everything else you do, know that you'll never know all you need to know and that you, like your students, will be a lifetime learner of this topic. But we hope this issue will not only give you a good start, but will also excite you and empower you to enjoy your journey!

What should we teach?

Here are some basic concepts to get you started:

- Discuss how Native people were the first inhabitants of the Americas.

Present materials that show an understanding of the complexities and sophistication of Native societies, past and present.

- Teach that all American Indians do not look like the stereotypical Plains Indian. Challenge media depictions of Native people and discuss their harm to all of us.
- Discuss the diversity of American Indian cultures and history, and guide students to find the similarities and differences among regional groups.
- Teach about the complexity of diversity and ethnicity and avoid taking an "us" versus "them" approach.
- Look critically at potential books and materials for those that present the continuity of American Indian societies and contemporary Native issues.

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How Should We Teach?

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- Teach that American Indians are still here!
- Use resources that show contemporary Native children engaged in everyday activities as well as in more traditional activities. Whenever possible, use books and materials written and illustrated by Native people.
- Thoroughly research the history and traditions of Native people before using activities and materials in the classroom. Consider focusing on one group that would be relevant to your students.
- Avoid presenting arts and crafts or other activities that trivialize American Indian dance, dress or ceremony.
- Teach about Native people as a regular part of history using accurate materials and primary documents where possible.
- Integrate Native studies into many different facets of the curriculum, including literature, art, science and math.

For more specific ideas, please go to these websites:

The National Museum of the American Indian

www.nmai.si.edu/subpage.cfm?subpage=education&second=pub, where you can print or order teaching guides or teaching posters on such topics as the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois), the Thanksgiving myth, the Winter Count of the Nakota, the Algonkian people of the Chesapeake Bay area, the Kwakwaka'wakw people of British Columbia, Plains dresses and Native quilts

Evanston's Mitchell Museum of the American Indian

www.mitchellmuseum.org/education/teachers.html, where you will find an excellent downloadable Grades K-12 curriculum overview and resources to accompany the lesson strands, created by their Education Committee. You can also print out pre- and post-visit lesson plans and worksheets to enhance your field trip there.

The NMAI publishes a wonderful resource, [Do All Indians Live in Tipis?](#) which should be required reading for all for students and teachers because it goes a long way in clearing up misconceptions and commonly held myths about American Indians. It will also give you some good ideas on topics to discuss in your classroom.

Guy Jones (Hunkpapa Lakota) and Sally Moomaw have written [Lessons From Turtle Island: Native Curriculum in Early Childhood Classrooms](#), an indispensable guide to Native-authored books and activities to use in five cross-cultural themes for very young children. We highly recommend this book to Early Childhood teachers!

Successfully Incorporating Literature

Providing your students with literature, about and by Native Americans—whether as read-aloud, book groups, Reader's Theatre or research—is an integral element of their experience. But please be careful which books you choose! Although the quality of writing has improved somewhat over the years, many older books and some more recent ones (especially written by non-Native authors) speak of Native people in the past tense, perpetrating the “End of the

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Teach about Native people as a regular part of history using accurate materials and primary documents whenever possible.

The Pathfinder is published by the Midwest Institute for Native American Studies

Executive Director - Linda Bechtel

Design & Layout - Mark Dolnick

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How Should We Teach?

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Trail" sentiment. And the illustrations in other books mix metaphors and continue the stereotype that all Native people dress in traditional Plains-type clothing. One prime example is Susan Jeffers' "Brother Eagle Sister Sky," which uses a speech supposedly given by Chief Sealth (whom Jeffers calls "Chief Seattle") at treaty negotiations in the 1850s. Although beautiful and environmentally relevant ("The earth does not belong to us. We belong to the earth..."), the speech as it is written here, and most commonly known, is a version highly embellished by a translator. Additionally, the illustrations (albeit lovely) are of Plains tipis and ponies, along with an Eastern Woodlands canoe, and have no connection at all with the Northwest Coast culture of Chief Sealth's heritage.

We strongly suggest that before you begin your Native studies you work with your school librarian to check out the efficacy of the books you plan to use. If you prefer a hands-on experience, Doris Seale (Santee Cree) and Beverly Slapin have written a number of books including [A Broken Flute: The Native Experience in Books for Children](#), a valuable resource that evaluates books written about American Indians. The following Web sites will provide you a great deal of insight into what Native people are looking for in appropriate reading material, and will also give you ideas as to Native authors to use if at all possible:

Debbie Reese, Ph.D. Nambé Pueblo, teaches at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and hosts the respected blog, [americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/](#). Her reviews of books written about and by American Indians are eye-opening and should be consulted by every teacher and school librarian. Reese's lists of Top Ten books for Elementary, Middle and High School are indispensable, as is her list of resources for research projects. Additionally, she provides guidelines for

evaluating American Indian websites and a list of tribally-owned websites.

Two other well-respected Native educators who operate the American Indian Library Association, Naomi Caldwell-Wood and Lisa Mitten, have a link on Debbie Reese's page that also should be bookmarked by anyone interested in providing the best resources for their students. Their site, [www.nativeculturelinks.com/ailabib.htm](#), provides a wealth of information, including bibliographies of recommended books and books to avoid, as well as information on recognizing stereotypes and sources for books. Native American Teachers Resources on the Internet, at [www.hanksville.org/NAresources/](#) compiled by Karen M. Strom, provides links and bibliographies to almost every topic area imaginable. It will prove to be one of your favorite bookmarks!

Native American Children's Literature In the Classroom: An Annotated Bibliography, [library.humboldt.edu/%7Eberman/naclit.htm](#)

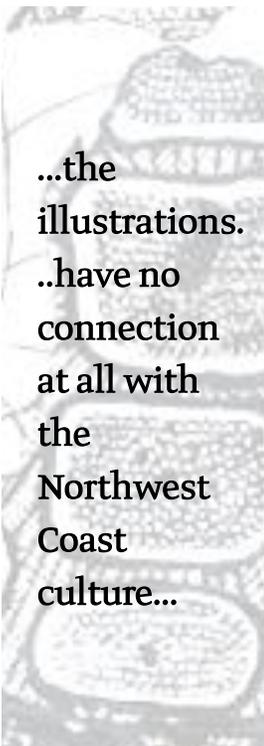
by Joan Berman, provides a listing of numerous pertinent articles and books. It has an excellent collection of overview material and is particularly recommended to those beginning to familiarize themselves with this important topic.

Native Americans: A Resource List for Teaching To Or About Native Americans, [scils.rutgers.edu/%7Ekvander/ChildrenLit/nalist.html](#) is a highly recommended site by Debbie Reese and Jean Mendoza that includes children's literature, Web resources, professional resources, music and videos.

Recommended Books About Thanksgiving, [americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/2007/11/good-books-about-thanksgiving.html](#) is a really thoughtful blog from American Indians in Children's Literature, written by Debbie Reese. I think it should be mandatory reading by every elementary teacher in America!

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...the illustrations..have no connection at all with the Northwest Coast culture...



Teaching Respect for Native Peoples

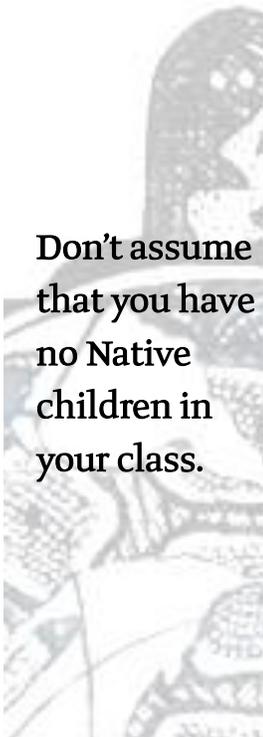
DO

- ① Present Native peoples as appropriate role models with whom a Native child can identify.
- ① Look for books and materials written and illustrated by Native people.
- ① Read and discuss good poetry, suitable for young people, by contemporary Native writers.
- ① Use primary source material—speeches, songs, poems, writings—that show the linguistic skill of peoples who came from an oral tradition.
- ① Avoid arts and crafts and activities that trivialize Native dress, dance or ceremony.
- ① Present Native peoples as separate from each other, with unique cultures, languages, spiritual beliefs and dress.
- ① Talk about the lives of Native peoples in the present.
- ① Make sure you know the history of Native peoples, past and present, before you attempt to teach it.

DON'T

- ⓪ Single out Native children, ask them to describe their families' traditions, or their people's cultures.
- ⓪ Do or say anything that would embarrass a Native child.
- ⓪ Assume that you have no Native children in your class.
- ⓪ Use ABC books that have "I is for Indian" or "E is for Eskimo."
- ⓪ Use counting books that count "Indians."
- ⓪ Use story books that show non-Native children "playing Indian."
- ⓪ Use picture books by non-Native authors that show animals dressed as "Indians."
- ⓪ Use story books with characters like "Indian Two Feet" or "Little Chief."
- ⓪ Use books in which "Indian" characters speak in either "early jawbreaker" or in the oratorical style of the "noble savage."
- ⓪ Make "Indian crafts" unless you know authentic methods and have authentic materials.
- ⓪ Have children dress as "Indians," with paper-bag "costumes" or paper-feather "headdresses."
- ⓪ Sing "Ten Little Indians."
- ⓪ Refer to Native spirituality as "superstition."
- ⓪ Use books that show Native peoples as savages, primitive craftspeople, or simple tribal people, now extinct.
- ⓪ Make charts about "gifts the Indians gave us."

Don't assume that you have no Native children in your class.



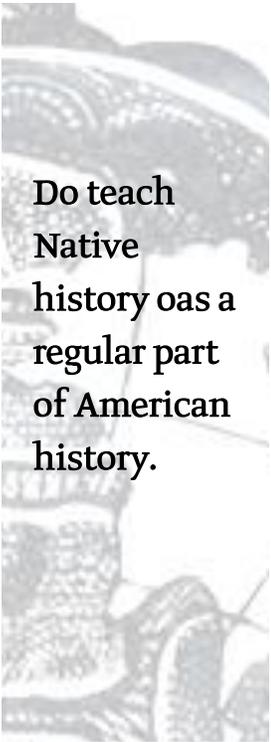
Teaching Respect for Native Peoples

DO

- 🕒 Teach Native history as a regular part of American history.
- 🕒 Use materials that put history in perspective.
- 🕒 Discuss the relationship between Native peoples and the colonists and what went wrong with it.
- 🕒 Use materials that present Native heroes who fought to defend their own people.
- 🕒 Use materials that show respect for, and understanding of, the sophistication and complexities of Native societies.
- 🕒 Use materials that show the continuity of Native societies, with traditional values and spiritual beliefs connected to the present.
- 🕒 Use materials that show Native women, elders and children as integral and important to Native societies.
- 🕒 Portray Native cultures as coexisting with nature in a delicate balance.
- 🕒 Use respectful language in teaching about Native peoples.
- 🕒 Invite Native community members to the classroom. Offer them an honorarium. Treat them as teachers, not as entertainers.

DON'T

- 🕒 Teach “Indians” only at Thanksgiving.
- 🕒 Use materials that manipulate words like “victory,” “conquest” or “massacre” to distort history.
- 🕒 Speak as though “the Indians” were here only for the benefit of the colonists.
- 🕒 Use materials that present as heroes only those Native people who aided Europeans.
- 🕒 Use materials that stress the superiority of European ways, and the inevitability of European conquest.
- 🕒 Make up Indian “legends” or “ceremonies.”
- 🕒 Use books that portray Native women and elders as subservient to warriors.
- 🕒 Portray Native peoples as “the first ecologists.”
- 🕒 Let children do “war-whoops.”
- 🕒 Encourage children to do Indian “dances.”
- 🕒 Use insulting terms such as “brave,” “squaw,” “papoose,” “Indian givers,” “wild Indian,” “blanket Indians” or “wagon burners.”
- 🕒 Assume that every Native person knows everything there is to know about every Native nation.



Do teach Native history as a regular part of American history.

Material Interests

By Mark Dolnickj

ASK MOST CHILDREN to tell you about Native Americans and they'll probably tell you that they lived in tipis, rode horses, carved totem poles, wore buckskin clothing and spoke in grunts or sign language. Oh, and that they all died out.

Most parents and teachers have no clue where their children get these ideas, but casual research shows that they persist in most areas of Illinois and among different age groups.

"I did make it a goal to make materials to educate the teachers as well as the students."

"We're not mandated to teach about American Indians, but we know children enjoy learning about them," said one third grade teacher. "We don't have a set curriculum to use, but most teachers like to start with a broad look at all cultural areas and then get more specific. We usually study the Woodlands and Plains, but I guess the children have a pretty selective memory when asked to recall specific information."

These ideas even persist in some Montessori schools, where teachers often can spend more time on their American Indian studies unit than most public schools. "We just don't have the background knowledge we need,"

lamented another teacher. "There's very few materials to use, so we generally just have to do the best we can. And we might be unknowingly passing along some misinformation."

MINAS Executive Director Linda Bechtle understands completely where these two teachers are coming from. "That's where I started, too," she said. "I'm embarrassed to admit some of the stereotypical mistakes I made when I started out making

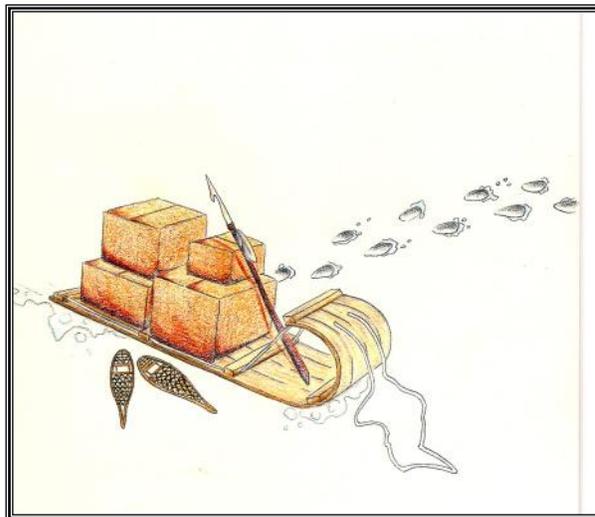
materials.

Thankfully, my Native friends didn't hold them against me," she laughs.

"But I did make it a goal to make materials to educate the teachers as well as the students."

While her first materials focused on the Potawatomi people who call the

Chicagoland area their homeland, Bechtle quickly realized the need to devise some materials to introduce young students to the similarities and differences of traditional Native people across America in how they met their needs. She purchased a wooden puzzle map of the Native cultural areas as of 1492 from a company called "Hello Wood" in Tennessee and went from there.



Potawatomi artist Heath Wilcox drafted this toboggan picture for the "Tools" book

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Material Interests

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“We have Montessori materials that discuss the Fundamental Needs of People from a very Eurocentric point of view,” Bechtle says, “which makes sense because Maria was Italian. But we need to approach this broad topic from an American point of view so it makes more sense to our children.”

So Bechtle crafted small books on Clothing, Foods, Transportation, Tools and Weapons, Crafts, Communication, Housing, Environment and Games. For her trial materials, she borrowed some black and white artwork from other books and painstakingly colored them, creating a set of illustrations for each book as well as much smaller cards with the same pictures. So after

students read the “House” book, they find the smaller pictures and match them to the appropriate cultural area on the map. “When they’re done, they have a map of American Indian cultural areas with all of the types of housing represented,” Bechtle explains. “Students can plainly see that not all Native people lived in tipis.”

While many of the books have one correct answer for each cultural area, there are some books that are open to

interpretation. “In the ‘Foods’ book, students learn that many Native people made use of deer,” Bechtle explains, “So the deer card can be placed in Woodlands, Southeast, Plains, Basin, California...pretty much anywhere. Same with corn, buffalo and some other foods. But alligators are pretty specific to the Southeast.” After students read the book and place their cards on the map, they check themselves on a “Control of Error” sheet and then choose two topics from each book to draw and write about.

The material has been a big hit in all of the Chicagoland Montessori classrooms that have field-tested it, and Bechtle is ready for the material to reach a broader audience.

Because some of the topics are pretty difficult to present in

a very simple way, she worked with a professional curriculum consultant to introduce the concepts and vocabulary at a third-grade reading level. She also worked with some talented Native artists in Michigan to create original art. “It’s another beautiful material that will provide a unique learning experience for students and teachers alike,” Bechtle said. “I’d love to see it used in every Montessori elementary classroom in the state!”

The material has been a big hit in all of the Chicagoland Montessori classrooms that have field-tested it.



An elementary student places cards from the “Transportation” book into their corresponding places on the Cultural Areas map.

Talking Turkey: The Truth About The First Thanksgiving

(previously published in the Fall, 2003 issue of the Montessori Foundation's *Tomorrow's Child* magazine)

By Linda Bechtle

In thousands of schools all across America this coming November, students will hear and maybe even re-enact the story of the "First Thanksgiving." More than likely, parents and teachers will pass along what they learned in the classrooms of their own childhood. You probably still remember the picture books: the Pilgrim men with their tall, buckled hats and muskets, and women with their white aprons, joining the half-naked but jovial Indians, Squanto acting as interpreter around a table groaning with food. "The Indians had never seen such a feast!" is one line that sticks in the memory of my youth.

Unfortunately, this traditional Thanksgiving story is actually a hodgepodge of history and myth. The truth is not simply a tale of the victimized, noble Pilgrims and the ignorant, friendly Wampanoag savages as Hollywood film archives would have us believe. The real story of this holiday is actually more suitable for a supermarket tabloid, with the Native kidnappings and epidemics that led up to it and the deceit and cultural destruction that followed. With just a little bit of research, you will understand why many Native Americans consider the Thanksgiving holiday to be, instead, a Day of Mourning.

As Montessorians, I believe it imperative that we help our students separate the facts from the myths. While I believe it is not developmentally appropriate for young students to be given all of the grim details, Montessori teachers need to make every effort to avoid the oversimplified, stereotypical approach we were given as students. I'd like to offer some suggestions:

Start with Literature: As we know, preparation of the teacher is a major component for a successful classroom, so you might need to examine your own

understanding of this holiday. Please refer to the Resource List accompanying this article for some must-have references.

Then, with your help, younger students can begin to analyze the literature of this holiday to separate out fact from fiction. Start with any of the books featuring photos of re-enactors from the Plimoth Plantation to introduce students to Wampanoag culture, then share with them some of the traditional stories. You might be surprised at how quickly they observe the differences! Be prepared to follow the children when the discussion branches out to include other examples of Native misrepresentation in America today, especially regarding sports mascots.

When given the research opportunity, older students can easily discover the facts and develop their critical thinking skills by analyzing the politics and popular culture behind the myths. Primary source documents are readily available.

Add Some Food: A wide variety of authentic recipes are available so your students and/or parents can re-create a Native fall harvest celebration. Remember to check your ingredient list carefully—no sugar was used in 1621! It's a great time to reinforce the fact that the fall thanksgiving feast was just one of many throughout the year for Native people as they welcomed the harvests of seasonal foods, and that these celebrations have gone on for many thousands of years. Make sure to get the children thinking about the New England environment and how the menu would change for each of the seasonal Native celebrations, or focus instead on the seasonal resources available in your part of the country.

...older students can easily discover the facts and develop their critical thinking skills...

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Talking Turkey

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This would also be a great time to discuss or re-enact the seasonal celebrations of other cultures: The Chinese Mid-Autumn festival, the Zulu First Fruit Ceremonies and the Jewish feast of Sukkot among them.

Please refrain from asking students to create and wear Pilgrim hats and Indian feathered headbands or engaging in any scripted re-enactments between Squanto and Governor Bradford, as such activities contribute to the First Thanksgiving myth and are disrespectful to Native people.

Give Thanks: Harvest celebrations are just one way that traditional Native people give thanks throughout the year. In some parts of the country, one person of each village is selected to rise with the sun and greet the day with a special song. In parts of the Plains, a sacred pipe is raised to the four Directions while a song of praise is chanted. In other areas, tobacco is sprinkled on the lakes and gardens to give thanks, or given to the deer that is killed or the berry bush that is picked as a way of showing gratitude. Some Native Nations begin every important meeting with a prayer of thanks to the Creator for all that has been created.

Americans have a lot for which to be thankful, but many children growing up today take a lot for granted. This is a wonderful time to help young students in self-examination and expression of the gratitude they feel for their material and non-material gifts.

The Thanksgiving holiday should not be the only time children are asked to do this, of course. Let's consider adding a "What I'm Thankful For Today" component to our elementary line activities to develop moral and spiritual growth.

Giving, Thanks: As a natural consequence of our self-examination at this time of year, many community service projects should be begun. Food and clothing drives are essential now with winter looming in the

not-too-distant future, but need to be continued through the year for those less fortunate. Older students can also bring companionship to the elderly or volunteer their services in animal shelters. Whether it is an individual class project or a school-wide drive for a hometown agency or an international group, giving and sharing are essential components of a good Montessori program.

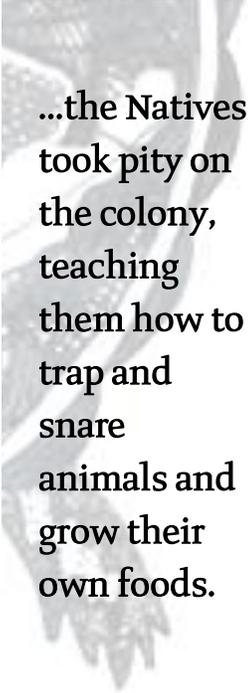
Putting aside the myth-versus-reality complications of this holiday for a moment, one overriding fact should be made perfectly clear: If it hadn't been for the generosity of Squanto and the Wampanoag people, the Plymouth Colony would have never made it through the first winter.

Despite their own hardships and grief after barely surviving the European-borne diseases, the Natives took pity on the colony, teaching them how to trap and snare animals and grow their own foods. These acts of giving and sharing ultimately and unwittingly led to the loss of Native lands and ancestors that many Native people today mourn every Thanksgiving.

Continuing Your Study: Perhaps if the exploring Europeans and early American settlers had any inkling of the technical ingenuity and spiritual cosmology of the people who lived here long before, they would not have considered Native people "ignorant savages" and attempted to wipe out their culture. Unfortunately, most Americans today still have little real knowledge of the Historic tribes, and even less of the ancient Puebloans or the mighty Mississippians. Providing students with valid information, culturally sensitive activities and a balanced look at the issues facing Native people today need to become a priority if we are to teach the truth about this country's history.

Many traditional schools begin their unit about Native people around Columbus Day and finish it up at Thanksgiving. Some of these units leave students with a hodgepodge of information, believing that

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...the Natives took pity on the colony, teaching them how to trap and snare animals and grow their own foods.

Talking Turkey

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all peoples wore their hair in Mohawks, ate buffalo, built totem poles and lived in tipis. Please remember that, since Montessori elementary teachers generally have three years with a student, there's no need to try to cover 30,000 years of human history in a month! Take your time, talk to the education departments of local tribes and museums, spread the activities out over the course of a year, and have fun!

Pass the Facts, Please...

✓ The infamous 1621 event with the Pilgrims and 90 Indians was a secular harvest celebration which, as far as we know, was never repeated. It was not mentioned in William Bradford's journals and was only discovered in the 1820s when a historian found a reference to it in *A Journal of the Pilgrims at Plymouth: Mourt's Relation*.

✓ There was no mention of prayer or thanks being given, and the meal did not include cranberry sauce and pumpkin pie! Turkeys might not have been on the menu, either (gasp!) because they were (and are) so hard to catch.

✓ A "Day of Thanksgiving and Praise" was declared in Plymouth Colony, but not until the summer of 1623 after a rainstorm ended a drought that had threatened the colonists' crops. This traditional Puritan Thanksgiving began with a religious ceremony in their meetinghouse and was followed by modest meals, but work and amusements were forbidden. These days of thanksgiving could be declared many days a year, or not at all, depending on the number of favorable events enjoyed by the colony.

✓ Days of "Fasting and Humiliation" were also declared when unfavorable events signaled God's displeasure with the faithful.

✓ The late Penobscot Professor Dr. William Newell discovered that, in all likelihood, the first true colonial American Thanksgiving was proclaimed in 1637 to

commemorate the murder of approximately 700 Pequots who were celebrating their annual green corn dance at Mystic Fort, near today's Groton, CT.

✓ Historians from Virginia, Florida and Texas have all found references to harvest feasts celebrated by Spanish and British settlers and their Native neighbors beginning in the late 1500s.

✓ America's indigenous people traditionally host thanksgiving feasts at harvest times throughout the year, so the very first "Thanksgiving" might have been held more than 30,000 years ago!

✓ The first national American Thanksgiving was declared in 1777 and observed with a religious focus until 1815. After the Civil War, most states declared their individual celebrations of the holiday which, by mid-century, emphasized feasting, family reunions and charity to the poor. President Lincoln declared the first of our modern Thanksgiving holidays in 1863, to be held annually on the last Thursday in November. After years of controversy over the date, President Roosevelt signed a bill in 1941 establishing the holiday on the fourth Thursday in November, where it has remained to this day.

Suggested Resources

Teacher References

✧ www.plimoth.org The official website for the Plimoth Plantation, a living museum in Plymouth, MA. Links to primary source documents and recipes.

✧ Thanksgiving: A Native Perspective. A wonderful collection of articles, stories, Wampanoag cultural information and source documents to enlighten all adults. Especially valuable for teachers. Available from Oyate (www.oyate.org)

✧ Bigelow, Bill, and Bob Peterson, "Rethinking Thanksgiving" in Rethinking Columbus: The Next 500 Years. This wonderful collection of articles, poems,

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...the very first "Thanksgiving" might have been held more than 30,000 years ago!

Talking Turkey

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stories and classroom activities by Native and non-Native historians and educators is a wonderful resource. Published by Rethinking Schools, an organization committed to equity, social justice and school reform (www.rethinkingschools.org)

✳ Loewen, James, Lies My Teacher Told Me. A fascinating examination of elementary and high school history textbooks and the misinformation they're been giving our students—and teachers—for many years.

Books for Students

✳ Baker, James, Plimoth Plantation: A Pictorial Guide. Wonderful photographs of on-site re-enactors transport students on board the Mayflower and into life on the Plimoth Plantation and the neighboring Wampanoag Homesite. Grades 1-5.

✳ Bruchac, Joseph, Squanto's Journey: The Story of the First Thanksgiving. This prolific Abenaki author tells the story of this harvest feast through the eyes of Squanto, a fascinating character in his own right. Great illustrations. Grades 3-5.

✳ Bruchac, Joseph, The Circle of Thanks: Native American Poems and Songs of Thanksgiving. A wonderful collection of simple yet thought-provoking poems from a variety of Native cultures, with vivid illustrations. Great for read-aloud and as a starting point for reflective writing exercises. Grades 1-5.

✳ Chief Jake Swamp, Giving Thanks: A Native American Good Morning Message. This Akwesasne Mohawk leader has simplified the language of the Iroquois Confederacy's traditional Thanksgiving Address to show even very young students the many ways Native people give thanks every day. Wonderful artwork lends to the book's read-aloud appeal. Grades PreK-3.

✳ Dorris, Michael, Guests. An engaging, coming-of-age novella from the viewpoints of two young Wampanoag villagers who just don't understand why outsiders are invited to their harvest feast. Grades 3-5.

✳ Grace, Catherine O'Neill and Margaret M. Bruchac, 1621: A New Look at Thanksgiving. Photographs of re-enactors at the Plimoth Plantation bring this well-written look at the history and mythology of this holiday to life. Grades 5-7.

✳ Lowitz, Sadyebeth and Anson, The Pilgrims' Party: A Really Truly (sic) Story. A classic from 1931, this one covers most of the mythical bases. Grades 1-5.

✳ Sewall, Marcia, People of the Breaking Day. The traditional beliefs and lifestyle of the Wampanoag people before European contact. Grades 3-5.

✳ Sewall, Marcia, The Pilgrims of Plimoth. This companion book to People of the Breaking Day uses a Pilgrim voice to tell the story of their arrival and settlement without focusing on the feast. Grades 3-5.

✳ Sewall, Marcia, Thunder from the Clear Sky. The final book of the trilogy provides Pilgrim and Wampanoag viewpoints of their eventual clash of beliefs and cultures. Grades 3-5.

✳ Waters, Kate, Giving Thanks: The 1621 Harvest Feast. What might have happened that day, as told from the perspectives of Wampanoag Dancing Moccasins and Pilgrim Resolved White. Great photographs of re-enactors on the Plimoth Plantation. Very nicely done with relatively simple text, but a bit too long for read-aloud. Grades 3-5.

✳ Waters, Kate, Tapenum's Day: A Wampanoag Indian Boy in Pilgrim Times. Sarah Morton's Day: A Day in the Life of a Pilgrim Girl. Samuel Eaton's Day: A Day in the Life of a Pilgrim Boy. Created with the staff of the Wampanoag Indian Program and Plimoth Plantation, this highly recommended trilogy provides well-researched, first-person accounts of the characters' daily activities and beliefs. Accompanied by stunning photographs of re-enactors. Grades 1-3. 🌟

Days of
fasting and
Humiliation
were also
declared
when
unfavorable
events
signaled
God's
displeasure...

How Should We Teach?

(Continued from page 3)

Rethinking American Indians, www.u.arizona.edu/ic/kmartin/School by Karen Martin (Creek) at Stanford University, focuses on stereotypes and activities for reconsidering them. It is part of a larger site, First Americans for Grade Schoolers, and emphasizes the Dine (Navajo), Muscogee (Creek), Tlingit, Lakota and Iroquois Nations.

www.oyate.org is a wonderful organization that evaluates educational resources and fiction by and about Native people, leads workshops for teachers, and distributes excellent examples of such materials, making an effort to highlight Native authors and illustrators. It's a great place from which to order books for your classroom, school or personal library.

Appropriate Arts and Crafts Activities

Well-meaning teachers may also unwittingly perpetuate stereotypes through their choice of crafts activities. A good number of the choices in such books as More Than Just Moccasins or The Kids' Multicultural Art Book are inappropriate because they are culturally insensitive, perpetuate stereotypes and even demean Native cultures.

Here are some of the activities to pass up:

Making feathers, headdresses and "warbonnets": To Native people, feathers are sacred and making headdresses is highly offensive. Feathers are used in ceremonies to carry prayers to the Creator and in many American Indian cultures, were given as a gift after an extraordinary

accomplishment, not cut out of construction paper. As a comparison, teachers would not have children make yarmulkes as a strategy to learn about Jewish people!

Totem Poles: When teachers ask their children to make totem poles out of toilet paper rolls, they take away their deep meaning. Totem poles are still carved to preserve important teachings and communicate them to future generations, and they are used in ceremonies.

Peace Pipes: The Pipe is considered sacred by every Native culture and is brought out only for significant occasions. American Indians believe it is highly inappropriate for students to make peace pipes out of toilet paper rolls or any other material.

Drums: To Native people, the drum is sacred and represents the heartbeat of Mother Earth. It is treated with great respect and to be the "drumkeeper" is a high honor. Indian children do not make drums, and for other children to make drums is considered disrespectful.

Sand Paintings: Navajo sand paintings are created for religious or healing ceremonies, and though some designs have been manufactured for the tourist trade, many others are so sacred even photograph-taking is not allowed. Suggesting that students make sand paintings "in the Navajo way" is inappropriate. Likewise, **Kachinas** and **Power Shields** are also to be avoided.

Fetish Necklaces: The animal fetishes in

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To Native people, feathers are sacred and making headdresses is highly offensive.

How Should We Teach?

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traditional Hopi necklaces were given to families and individuals and carry special significance. Some Natives feel that having children carve fetish animals out of soap to make necklaces shows a lack of respect.

Brown bag “vests”, breechclouts and other articles of clothing that encourage children to “dress up like Indians” should be avoided not because they are sacred but because they reinforce the stereotype that all Native people are the same. This type of activity also conveys the notion that children can become Indian by dressing up.

OK....so what does that leave?

Many Native educators suggest creating art activities that **anchor to historic events**. For instance, use the NMAI poster of Lone Dog’s Winter Count to show how Nakota historians kept track of their yearly events through symbolic painting on the back of a buffalo hide. Students can create their own personal timeline through this activity and it can be tied into other calendar studies.

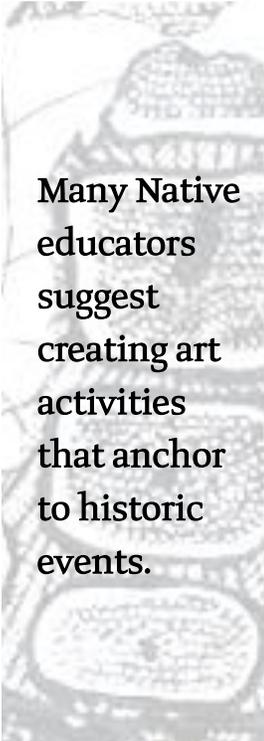
Link the craft to an artform study. For instance, discuss the roots of ledger art, which evolved from prisoners incarcerated during the wars that forced Natives from their Western lands. When given ledger books to keep their hands busy, these artists drew detailed battle scenes and scenes of their pre-reservation lives. Or examine the styles of contemporary Native artists and ask students to create their own works in the same style.

Tie the craft to literature: Making corn husk dolls would be an appropriate activity during times of harvest; accompany the craft with the Oneida story of the “no face” doll. Likewise, introduce a Dreamcatcher-making activity with the legend of how the dreamcatcher came to be.

You can also **tie in math to craft activities**. Ask students to create geometric patterns on graph paper than can then be translated to beadwork—or compare the geometric patterns of the Plains to the more floral patterns of the Eastern Woodlands. Geometric patterns are also found in Seminole patchwork of the Southeast and Eastern Woodland applique work. Incorporate sewing skills to re-create Lakota star quilts, as well. Younger students can replicate patterns while stringing beads, or use pony beads to create beaded keychains.

Arlene Hirschfelder and Yvonne Beamer Wakim have written two wonderful resources to guide teachers in choosing appropriate craft activities and we urge you to follow their suggestions: *Native Americans Today: Resources and Activities for Educators Grades 4-8* (some of the crafts can be simplified for younger students) and *A Kid’s Guide to Native American History: More than 50 Activities*. We also suggest that you contact Native-themed museums as the Mitchell Museum in Evanston and the Schingoethe Center for Native American Studies in Aurora for additional ideas.

Thank you for making the extra effort to provide your students with meaningful and culturally appropriate experiences! 🌟



Many Native educators suggest creating art activities that anchor to historic events.

Joining the Powwow Circle

By Linda Bechtle

ANOTHER LONG, COLD WINTER is finally over, and that can only mean Powwow season is right around the corner! My datebook is already filling up with planned day- or weekend trips to Wisconsin, Indiana, Michigan and right here in Illinois for these great events.

My stomach is already growling for the Sassafras tea, frybread tacos, corn chowder and wild rice soup, and I can't forget the amazing frybread with fresh strawberries. But it's not just the food—powwows are great opportunities to admire and purchase authentic pieces from Native artisans—black ash baskets, decorated gourds, wonderful beadwork and jewelry. And the regalia! From my limited, fumble-fingered attempts at ribbonwork appliqué and beading, I have some idea of the investment of skill, patience and time that created those beautiful designs.

But those are not the only reasons I go to powwows. Despite my being a *chimookmankwe* (or “Long Knife Woman” in Potawatomi), I am moved by the songs in ways words can't really describe. It can be 90 degrees and I still get goosebumped by some Flag Songs, and I've embarrassed my poor daughter Madison more times than she'd care to remember as other songs have evoked tears from my normally tough façade. In possibly the most surprising transformation from my solid anti-war stance, I am often moved to join the circle at the Veterans Dance to honor my father and my Native and non-Native friends for their sacrifices in the services.

Powwows, especially the traditional gatherings sponsored by one tribe, are opportunities for Native people to celebrate culture and family, to reconnect both with far-flung relatives and the spirituality and ceremony of tribal beliefs. To be allowed a glimpse into a culture that generations of *chimookmanek* before me did their best to extinguish is a privilege.

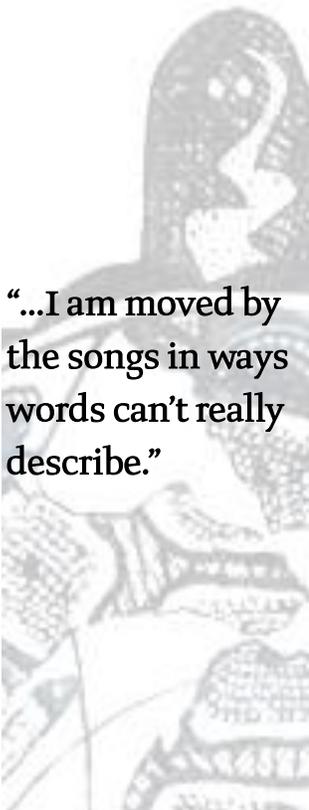
While *The Pathfinder* lists upcoming events within a day's drive from the Chicago area, there are powwows held all over the country all year round (try a search at google.com to locate a Web site with a schedule for your area). While I can't guarantee you'll find the same delicious cuisine or have the same emotional reaction that I do, I can guarantee the experience will be educational and memorable for you and your family, and I urge you to attend at least one this year.

While tribal traditions vary slightly from area to area, please follow these basic rules to show respect:

- * Please ask permission before taking a photograph.
- * Please do not take any photographs or recordings of any kind during the Grand Entry, Flag Song, Veterans Song, or any Honor Song, unless directed otherwise by the emcee. Also, if you are physically able, please remove your hat and stand during those songs.
- * Please do not touch any part of a dancer's regalia.
- * You are welcome to join the dancers during Intertribal songs indicated by the Emcee. Please enter the arena at the east entrance behind the head dancers and move in a clockwise direction. Relax and follow the simple steps!

Wherever you call home, there's a powwow with your name on it this summer! We hope you enjoy the experience. 🍀

“...I am moved by the songs in ways words can't really describe.”



Upcoming Powwows

April 2	Southern Illinois Saluki Powwow 200 South Illinois, Carbondale, IL	nativeatsiu@hotmail.com
April 2-3	22nd Annual Central Michigan University Powwow East Bloomfield Street, Mount Pleasant, MI	www.cmich.edu/ Institutional_Diversity/Diversity
April 30-May 1	American Indian Council of Indiana Powwow Boone County 4-H Fairgrounds Lebanon, IN	www.american indiancouncil.com
May 14-15	7 th Annual Honor the Eagle Powwow Routes 178 and 71 Utica, IL	www.midwestsoaring.org
May 21-22	7 th Annual Honoring our Children Powwow 64 Waterfall Road—Springwood Park Richmond, IN	
June 4-5	Grand Village of the Kickapoo Powwow LeRoy, IL	www.Grandvillage.org
June 11-12	Return to Pimiteoui Inter-Tribal Powwow 6329 North Koerner Road Edwards, IL	www.peoriapowwow.org
July 6-9	National Powwow 15 1900 East Main Street Danville, IL	www.nationalpowwow.com
July 16-17	Oregon Trail Days Powwow 1411 North River Road Oregon, IL	www.oregontraildays.org
August 12-14	Mihshikinaahkwa (Miami Tribe of Indiana) Powwow Morsches Park Columbia City, IN	www.miamipowwow.org
August 27-28	Potawatomi Trails Traditional Powwow 27 th and Emmas Streets Zion, IL	www.goflo.com/powwow
September 3-4	Kee-Boon-Mein-Kaa Powwow Pokagon Band Reservation Dowagiac, MI	www.pokagon.com
September 3-4	48 th Annual Tecumseh Lodge Powwow 1200 S. Main Street Tipton, IN	www.tecumsehlodge.org
September 9-11	Indian Summer Festival Henry Maier Festival Park Milwaukee, WI	www.indiansummer.org/
September 24-25	Midwest SOARRING's Annual Harvest Powwow Napier Settlement Naperville, IL	www.midwestsoaring.org
November 8-9	55 th Annual American Indian Center Powwow UIC Chicago Pavillion 1150 West Harrison, Chicago	www.aic-chicago.org

Check for updates at www.powwows.com/!

Yes! I'm interested in helping MINAS educate young Great Lakes students about their native cultures. My tax-deductible donation is enclosed:

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Please direct my donation to the Blanche Bechtle Library Fund

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Mi gwetth! (Thank you in Potawatomi)

We would love to hear your comments and suggestions about MINAS' efforts and this newsletter.
So give us a call at 847.328.5968, e-mail us at PotawProj@gmail.com,
or snail-mail us at the address below.

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Here's your next issue of
The Pathfinder

